

# 1. THE CONTRIBUTION OF PERSONALITY RESOURCES TO PROFESSIONAL COACHES' OCCUPATIONAL WELL-BEING

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**Introduction.** The stressors and strain approach has been the most predominant approach from which the sport coaches' well-being has been investigated. There is a relative absence of empirical research into coaches' coaching-related well-being that impacts on the effectiveness of the coaches' job performance. Inspired by the recommendation by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) that human strengths and the positive personality should be explored, and guided by Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources theory that states that personal characteristics, such as personality traits and skills function as personal resources aiding stress resistance, the present study investigated the contribution of three personality resources to professional coaches' occupational well-being.

Outside the sport and exercise domain and coaching literature, two of Hobfoll's (2002) examples of personality resources, self-esteem and sense of coherence, have repeatedly been linked to various indexes of occupational well-being, such as higher job satisfaction (Mäkikangas & Kinnunen, 2003; Strümpfer & Mlonzi, 2001). Emotional intelligence, a set of emotional skills used to accurately perceive, facilitate thought, understand, and regulate emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) have been shown to play a role in sport coaches' coaching efficacy (Thelwell, Lane, Weston, & Greenless, 2008). Outside the coaching literature, highly emotionally intelligent employees, have been shown to be able to reduce or transform the potential negative effects of job stress on job performance (Wu, 2011).

**Method.** In this study, 142 professional Finnish coaches (39 females, 103 males) were assessed using the mailed questionnaires concerning their self-esteem (Self-Esteem Scale by Rosenberg, 1965), sense of coherence (SOC; Orientation to Life Questionnaire by Antonovsky, 1987), emotional intelligence (Emotional Intelligence Scale by Schutte et al., 1998) and three indicators of occupational well-being (current working capacity, work enjoyment, perceived coaching-related stress). Data were analyzed using Pearson correlations and structural equation modeling (SEM). **Results.** Correlational findings showed that self-esteem, SOC, and the emotional skills of emotion identification and regulation were positively related to coaches' current work ability and work enjoyment. Self-esteem and the Comprehensibility and Manageability sub-dimensions of SOC were additionally related to lower perceived coaching-related stress. The findings based on SEM showed that SOC and emotional skills of emotion identification and regulation accounted for 42% of the variance of professional coaches' occupational well-being. Additionally, male coaches had better self-esteem and stronger SOC than female coaches.

**Discussion & Conclusion.** Self-esteem, emotional skills, and SOC appear to be valid concepts in coaching research and recommended personality resources for coach education to take into account.

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## **Bio of the presenting author Marja Kokkonen (max. 80 words)**

Marja Kokkonen (PhD in Psychology, MA in Sport Sciences) is a researcher in the department of sport sciences at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Her research has focused on the role of emotional and social competence in coaching and school physical education, and in the well-being of professional coaches, athletes, PE teachers and their pupils. As a licensed psychologist with an additional certificate in sport and exercise psychology, she has been actively involved in coach education since 2005.